

# PEOPLE & THINGS

**T**HE bureaucratic building of private empires flourishes amidst the prodigal chaos of war, but a splendid example from America shows that the exhorting practice can also exist in peace-time.

The History of Medicine Division of the U.S. Armed Forces Medical Library has this month written to antiquarian booksellers throughout the world offering to buy some 350 listed editions of the Works of Hippocrates (born 460 B.C.), "The Father of Medicine," after whom was named the Hippocratic Oath whereby doctors are bound to secrecy.

## Tremble, Moscow!

**I**N its covering letter beneath the Seal of the Department of Defense, the Chief of the History of Medicine Division says that his library already contains some 400 printed editions, dating from 1473 to 1800, and he wishes to "round off" the collection (although it is generally held that few if any of the works attributed to Hippocrates could possibly have been written by him).

This singular expenditure of energy and money by a section of the U.S. Armed Forces is likely to cause distress only to the American taxpayer and perhaps to the G.I. who may fear that he will be treated in accordance with the famous treatise "On Wounds of the Head" which dates from the fourth century B.C.

It will certainly not cause Mr. Malenkov any sleepless nights.

## Maestro Ashton

**T**HIS is the golden age of English ballet, and nobody has done more to develop our world-wide reputation in this strenuous art than Frederick Ashton.

As evidence of his prestige, after nearly a quarter of a century of almost continuous creativeness, I hear that he is now having to choose between four invitations to act as guest choreographer this autumn. They come from La Scala, Milan, the Royal Theatre, Copenhagen, the State Opera House, Helsinki, and the New York City Ballet.

Recently, and not for ideological reasons, he had regretfully to turn down an invitation to visit Moscow and Leningrad; and then having just returned from the Sadler's Wells performances at The Hague, he left in company with Margot Fonteyn and a few others, to take part in the Granada Festival.

If that is not international fame I do not know what is.

## Naval Lore

**A**T a recent private Naval reunion a distinguished admiral gave currency to two attractive

*By ATTICUS*

myths which regretfully and with humble duty I beg leave to explode.

The first was that baths and other domestic apparatus flush clockwise north and anti-clockwise south of the equator.

Mr. Bandy, naval architect of the Orient Line, says: "A foolish rumour. Quite untrue. Flushing obeys only the behest of waste-pipe designers."

The distinguished admiral also maintained that albatrosses never cross the equator. Mr. Macdonald, Curator of Birds at the Natural History Museum, says that the Wandering Albatross exists chiefly in the Southern Hemisphere, but specimens have been found as far north as England, and one was seen last year off the East Coast.

How dull!



Bassano

## Lord Llewellyn

**G**LOOMY prognostications that the creation of a federation of the Rhodesias and Nyasaland would result in widespread unrest and economic chaos have not been fulfilled. Though the personal prestige of Sir Godfrey Huggins, first Premier of the Federation, has been a steadying influence, much credit must go to the first Governor-General, Lord Llewellyn.

I am told that "Jay" Llewellyn's direct and common-sense approach, combined with his lack of pomposity, has won the support of many Africans hostile to the new régime. There is no doubt that his campaign to win the people's confidence made a deep impression in Nyasaland as well as the Rhodesias.

## First Ladies

**T**HOUGH a confirmed bachelor and a critic of women in politics, he has not allowed this to be a handicap as Governor-General. He is fortunate in having a step-sister and sister who can both fulfil admirably the duties of "First Lady" in Salisbury. The former, Mrs. Clara Doule, widow of Colonel S. M. Doule, R.E., has been a great asset to him in the Federation capital, and Miss Mary Llewellyn's experience as Mayor of Poole will be equally valuable as Mrs. Doule's successor.

Perhaps Lord Llewellyn has revised his opinion of "political women." Opposing the admission of women peers to the House of Lords little more than a year ago, he declared: "Political women are

inclined to be bossy. Do not let us introduce a bossy element into this House."

## The "Caine" Film

**"THE Caine Mutiny Court-martial,"** the author's dramatization of the book, has been playing to capacity on Broadway since January, but the motion picture, shown last week in New York, is having a mixed reception despite a male cast which includes Humphrey Bogart (as Captain Queeg), José Ferrer, Van Johnson and Fred MacMurray.

As one spiky reviewer puts it, the change from a case history of a psychopath (with anti-navy overtones) to a forthright cheer for the Navy may have been the price exacted by the Navy Department for the loan of several minesweepers and a carrier.

## "The Customer is —"

**"THE Caine Mutiny,"** published here by Jonathan Cape, has already sold over three million copies in the United States alone, but it is interesting to reflect that one of the most popular books of the century was turned down in 1951 by the first American publishing house to read it, refused by the book clubs when it appeared, and rejected as a serial by the big magazines.

Then the public started to buy it and talk about it, and it broke into the Best-Seller List of the "New York Times," where it stayed for 124 weeks. It won a Pulitzer Prize, was syndicated in forty-one American newspapers, and has been translated into thirteen languages.

## A propos de Jane

**T**HE last word on Jane Austen will never be written, but even Mr. Maigham, I think, has not put the case more succinctly than a young French journalist whose article, first printed in 1899, I was reading last week.

"Miss Austen's characters," he says, "are never analysed, or explained or described in detail. They reveal themselves involuntarily in phrases which are always simple and appropriate. It all looks so easy that we never realise that perspicacity, hard work and integrity are all there, and there in the highest degree."

"There are few books," he concludes, "which I should have been so glad to have written."

The young man in question never wrote a rival to "Emma," but he became Prime Minister of France. His name was Léon Blum.

## Unfair to Nero

**O**NE of the distractions provided for the Russian oarsmen at Henley was a visit to a local cinema at which "Quo Vadis" was being shown.

Their spokesman later expressed great displeasure at the treatment accorded to Nero. "They made him so decadent," he said. "So degenerate, so . . ." and words failed him at the memory of Mr. Ustinov's gleeful impersonation of "After all, the Russian went on — he was not decadent all the time. He was a great warrior, a leader of men. . . ."

His host, too polite to contest this assertion, went home and brushed up his Tacitus. Is it possible, he now wonders, that an exaggerated importance is attributed, in Soviet history-books, to Nero's only known military success — the suppression of the British rebels and their commander Roudinesco?